

[6 December, 2006]

RAJYASABHA

(a) whether some States have been allowed relaxation in some requirements for setting up Special Economic Zones;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reliefs adopted; and

(c) the reasons for which Kerala has not been allowed such relaxation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) While the minimum area required for a multi product Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is 1000 hectares, the requirement for setting up a sector specific SEZ is 100 hectares. However, considering the topography, special needs and availability of contiguous vacant areas in the Union Territories including erstwhile Union Territory of Goa and Special category States of Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh & Uttaranchal, the minimum area requirement of 200 hectares and 50 hectares for multi product and sector specific SEZ have been prescribed.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Export-Import between India-China

†1484. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether import-export between India and China has increased after opening of Nathula route, for trade between the two countries;

(b) whether Government propose to extend the current maximum limit on trade, to increase trade between the two countries; and

(c) if so, the details thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Import-Export trade between India and China has been growing rapidly for the last few years. The opening of Nathu La Border has not made any significant contribution to it.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) and (c) There is no current maximum limit on trade between India and China.

Welfare of Virginia tobacco growers in A.P.

1485. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any census of the economic state and welfare of Virginia tobacco farmers of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether the Tobacco Board has been involved in this exercise;

(c) how many farmers have sought permission to grow more tobacco;

(d) whether Government granted this permission; and

(e) the steps proposed to improve income of tobacco farmers of Andhra Pradesh?.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Tobacco Board has not taken up any such exercise.

(c) The FCV tobacco farmers of AP requested for increase in the crop size fixed initially by the Tobacco Board for 2006-07 AP crop season.

(d) On consideration of the request of AP FCV tobacco farmers, the crop size of 2006-07 AP crop season has been increased from 129.12 Mkg to 150 Mkg inclusive of 10% quantity as nature's bounty

(e) The Tobacco Board provides assistance to tobacco farmers through various Extension & Development schemes for improving the quality and production of tobacco in tune with the changing international demand and quality. The Board extends subsidy from 25% to 50% to the growers under various schemes such as Farm Mechanization, Integrated Pest Management, Energy conservation measures like fixing venturi furnaces to Bams and Roof Insulation to the Barns etc. The Board also helps farmers in construction of mini check dams/farm ponds for irrigation of tobacco crops and arranges input loans & crop loans.